

EDWALTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



At Edwalton Primary School our mission statement is at the heart of everything we do.

Mission Statement **Dream, Achieve and Flourish**

Introduction

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is widely understood pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence;
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

School Attendance - Statutory guidance and departmental advice (August 2013)

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular attendance. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Aims of the Policy

To promote excellent attendance thus offering all children equal access to learning.

Objectives of the Policy

- To meet the attendance targets set by the Government
- To create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers
- To ensure children are in school for the maximum number of days

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

		Action by school
96% and above	Less than 7 days absence a year. Excellent attendance! This will help all aspects of progress and life in school. Children are likely to reach their full potential, leading to the best possible start to their secondary education.	Certificates issued for attendance 96% +.
90-96%	Up to 19 days absence a year; this equates to missing up to a month of school in the year. Absence will now be affecting attainment and progress at school. Pupils will find it difficult to achieve their best.	Attendance will be monitored by the HT.
90% and below	<p>Approx. 19-28 days absence a year; this equates to missing a month+ of school time in the year. Absence causing serious concern.</p> <p>Children will now be finding it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best. Parents of children with this level of attendance will be contacted by the Head Teacher.</p> <p>Parents of children with this level of attendance may be referred to the Early Help Unit to support them in improving their child's attendance.</p> <p>Regular reports for the HT/governors/Trust are generated for attendance 90% and below.</p> <p>Reasons for each absence will be considered by the HT and a decision made on action to be taken.</p>	Letter issued inviting parents to meet with HT. Parents informed that attendance will be closely monitored & if no improvements, external agency support will be actioned.
<p style="text-align: center;">No improvement in attendance</p> <p>Parent/Carer will be invited to meet with HT again. The school will seek external advice and support regarding further action from the Trust and external agencies, such as Early Help and social services if necessary.</p>		

Duties and Responsibilities of School

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations of the school
- To offer support and guidance to families who are experiencing attendance problems
- Maintain appropriate attendance data and have monitoring processes in place
- Have appropriate registration processes in place
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school; initially with a first-day absence telephone call or text
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily; at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance and maintain a high profile of good attendance around school

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets, and for some governing bodies to set “focused absence targets” as required by the Secretary of State. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

Duties and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- To understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality to the educational, social and emotional welfare of their child
- To accept support and guidance from the school/external services should there be attendance problems
- To have children at school ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.450am (whistle blows at 8.40am)
- To inform school of any absence as early as possible on the day of absence
- To ensure that contact details on school records are kept up-to-date
- To request leave of absence in writing, at least 4 weeks in advance using the ‘Leave of Absence Form’
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance
- To make medical and dental appointments outside of school time
- To provide written evidence of any appointments made in the school day

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

If a child is absent:

Parents are expected to **inform the school** of the reason for their child’s absence on the first day. A message on the **first day** of absence is essential. We have to know that your child is safe.

If phone messages are taken by the office or the parent speaks to the school office staff or Head Teacher, a note will be recorded. Teachers should note verbal communication from parents/carers about absence on ScholarPack. These notes form evidence that the absence has been considered. Absence notes will be held

by school as 'evidence'. Every authorised absence should be supported by a parental letter/email and held on file.

Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. The child's attendance record will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised on the official attendance register.

Keeping a child off school with minor ailments is not acceptable. Repeated absences are closely monitored and the Head may request medical evidence from a doctor if it is a lengthy absence due to illness. Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.

If no explanation of absence is given by the parent it is the school's responsibility to make enquiries of the parent/carer as to the reason for the child's absence.

Home Visit – Welfare and Safeguarding of child – Day 1 of absence

If there is a child absent and **no contact is made by their parent/carer to school on the first day**, and school cannot get hold of anyone to explain the absence, **the Head Teacher will make a judgement whether that particular child needs a home welfare visit on Day 1 of absence.**

This will be carried out on the first day of absence by the Head Teacher and/or the Senior Leadership Team or Safeguarding Team, so it is with upmost importance school is contacted for every absence on the first morning.

Home Visit – Welfare and Safeguarding of child – Day 2 of absence

If there is still no contact made with school by Day 2 and that child hasn't already had a home welfare visit on Day 1, the Head Teacher and/or the Senior Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team will conduct a home welfare visit. **Day 2 home welfare visit is standard for every child.**

If the general pattern of attendance, including persistent lateness, gives cause for concern the Head Teacher will pass on the concerns to the appropriate agencies.

If there are concerns that a child is at risk or missing education, the guidelines in Appendix 1 will be followed.

Procedures for attendance concerns

Staff will log instances of absence and lateness and report on who is absent and why, every day with the Head Teacher. Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will contact the parent/carer and a meeting arranged with the Attendance Lead.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist a second meeting will be arranged between the parent/carer and the Head Teacher or Attendance Lead and support from the appropriate agency accessed.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist further, the Head Teacher will make a formal referral to the appropriate agencies to deal with the on-going issues.

Any child who has an on-going attendance figure that is less than 85% will be referred to the appropriate agencies by the Head Teacher unless there are special circumstances. Unexplained absences of Looked After Children or those who have a Child Protection concern file should be investigated immediately and referred to the Children's Social Care/MASH.

Please note that ultimately legal action can be taken.

Absences during term time

To provide consistency, the Government has introduced a new national framework for unauthorised absence (August 2024). The threshold for when a school should consider next steps is **10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. (A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session.) **The framework makes it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Previous regulations regarding approving absences (particularly those caused by family holidays) no longer apply. Absences will only be authorised if they are caused by genuine illness or by 'exceptional circumstances'. In the case of illness, school may ask parents/carers to produce a doctor's note especially in cases of extended or regular absence.

Standard **optician, dentist and doctor's appointments** should be made out of school times and do not constitute exceptional circumstances (unless in the case of emergencies). However, appointments at the hospital and orthodontist can be harder to arrange and these may be authorised in some cases.

Any **application for term time absences** caused by exceptional circumstances must be made using the 'Withdrawal From Learning' form to the Head Teacher **at least four weeks prior to the event if possible**. The application will be considered by the Head Teacher and a response given as soon as possible.

If, at this point, parents/carers wish to **appeal** against the decision, they should put their case in writing within 10 working days to be addressed to the Chair of Governors of the school. This appeal will be considered by a designated governor on behalf of the Chair. A final response will be issued after a further 10 working days.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Targeted Support Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

First Offence:

AS OF 19th AUGUST 2024, THE FIXED PENALTY PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £80 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £160 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Second Offence (within 3 years) - The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term time holidays

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is **absent for 5 days or more** then the school is expected to refer the case to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorized leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

There are approximately* 190 school days in a year (*vary year to year) which means there are also approximately 12 – 13 weeks of school holidays in which to take a family holiday. Holidays should be taken during this period and not in school time.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED** on the legal register. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always needed.

What is classed as 'Authorised Absence'?

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received evidence of the appointment or event (invite) from a parent/carer. Every absence from school will contribute to the attendance % on your child's record. Only statutory reasons such as school closures will not affect %. Examples of authorised absences:

- Illness
- On a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his or her parent belongs
- Other Authorised will cover events, bereavements, weddings (immediate family)
- When out of class for medical reasons (some) as detailed above – evidence will be required e.g. appointment card/letter
- When on an approved visit to another school or educational activity
- When granted leave of absence by the Trust or Governing Body
- If a parent/carer, due to the nature of their work, cannot take time off during the school holidays, this *may* constitute exceptional circumstances. This will need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer

If the school is satisfied that the reason for absence meets one of these criteria, the absence will be authorised. The Head Teacher will complete the relevant section on the Withdrawal From Learning form and a copy will be issued to the parent/carer. A copy will be kept on file. In all other circumstances, AND when no explanation is received at all, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation or evidence has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Holidays not agreed
- Extended holidays taken either side of school holidays
- Late after 9.15, 'U' register code contributes to attendance % on child's record

All absences will be recorded on a child's on-going record and will be passed on to their next school. At the termly Full Governing Body meetings the Head Teacher will report on attendance in school and extended levels of unauthorised absence.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill and is monitored regularly with attendance.

- Children must be in class by 8.45am each day; the whistle blows at 8.40am to ensure a prompt start. Registers will then be taken. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- The school gates will be locked at 9.00am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the register as late
- Any child arriving after 9.15am will receive a 'U' mark in the register. This is classed as a 'late mark after the register closed' and an unauthorised absence which in turn, affects their attendance percentage.
- Lateness will be monitored by the Head Teacher. Poor punctuality may be referred to the appropriate agency.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other children
- Lateness is considered to be equally as serious as absence
- Parents/carers of children who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem with the Head Teacher

Long term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work if they are able to.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the targeted support services.

Refusal to attend

Where a child refuses to attend school, parents must contact the school office to inform them on the first day of absence. Parents should explain that their child is refusing to attend; school will aim to work with parents to support their child in returning to school.

In the first instance, an appointment should be made with the Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher to see if reasons for the refusal to attend can be identified and addressed.

School will then work with parents/carers to offer to support. This may include:

- Discussion with Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher and Attendance Lead
- Home visits
- Pastoral support
- Referral to outside agencies

Attendance Registers

The Pupils Registration Regulations 1956, 1991 and 2006 state that every school should keep an attendance register. The school also acknowledges the amendments made to the act in 2013. Registers are therefore legal documents and must be completed accurately and in accordance with these regulations and the advice issued in DES Circular 11/91.

Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice a day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Any child arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as late.

If the reason for absence is not known when the register is marked the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and corrected, if necessary, as soon as the information becomes available (Education Pupil Registration Regulations 1995).

Teachers will complete registers in accordance with guidance given by the Head Teacher/DfE. Staff will inspect registers daily, along with regular audits, in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.

Should a class teacher have any concerns about a child's attendance and punctuality, the Attendance Lead / Head Teacher must be informed.

Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received, the class teacher will inform office staff who will endeavour to make contact with the parent.

The Head Teacher will regularly collect attendance data and use this during meetings with the Trust. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify tasks and follow-up actions for the school. Other agencies, such as Social Care, may also be involved.

Attendance Targets

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Governing Body and the Trust. The Head Teacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

Monitoring and reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor attendance.
- The Governing Body also has responsibility for this Policy and for seeing that it is carried out.
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they possibly can be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general concern about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher, who may contact the parents/carers.

Safeguarding

As a school we take all our safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously.

- We recognise that young people can be vulnerable in a number of ways and that the dangers in the online world are as much a threat as those in the real world.
- We have ensured that our staff understand what makes some children and adults more vulnerable to certain risk factors; how to recognise the signs of somebody at risk; and what to do if they have a cause for concern.
- We include in our consideration of risk radicalisation and extremism; female genital mutilation; forced marriage and honour based violence; and child sexual exploitation.
- We will ensure that any changes in behaviour or patterns of attendance are identified quickly and that appropriate action is taken swiftly and is proportionate to the level of concern.
- We will work with the whole school community to ensure all our stakeholders understand our wider safeguarding responsibilities and work in partnership with us to keep our pupils safe.

Written by: Daniel Graney (HT)

Date: September 2024

Review date: September 2026

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND BUSINESS MANAGERS WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

Child / young person is on roll but not attending	Child moving out of county	Family indicate they are moving abroad	School Allocations Intake or In-year admissions rounds
<p>School/Academy to attempt to make contact with parent/carers no later than day 3, best practice day 1. Follow your internal school attendance procedures.</p> <p>Days 0-10, School/Academy should continue to make efforts to engage the family, recording their contact: telephone conversations, texts, e-mails, letters, home visits. Liaising with professionals who may be involved. School/Academy should consider what action to take if attendance is 10% unauthorised.</p> <p>Whereabouts confirmed to be known but not attending education or engaging with School/Academy.</p> <p>Whereabouts unknown evidencing reasonable efforts to locate/make contact with the family.</p>	<p>Request from the family their new address and details of new School/Academy. If obtained please share with: admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk</p> <p>Hopefully the new school will make contact with you, if not, make contact with them to confirm on roll.</p> <p>If without a new school within 10 days, a referral should be made to: Children Missing Officer (CMO) providing the families new address, contact details and a summary of efforts made by school to engage the family.</p> <p>Child is of statutory school age but not applied or on roll of a School/Academy</p> <p>Direct referral to: Children Missing Education (CMO) Providing child's name / DOB / address and details of parent / carers.</p>	<p>School must request and record details of the new family address and school. You can't remove from roll without this. If obtained please share with: admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk http://www.languageshop.org/ (translation support)</p> <p>If school does not receive the above a referral should be made to: Children Missing Officer (CMO)</p> <p>Looked After Children (LAC)</p> <p>If a LAC is moving placement and no longer attending, school should liaise with the Virtual School and the child's Social Worker. DO NOT remove from roll.</p> <p>Independent / Residential Schools</p> <p>The same procedures should be followed as those in School's / Academies</p> <p>Gypsy/Roma/Traveller</p> <p>If a Traveller family indicate they are to travel for work purposes School/Academy should request details of where they will be travelling and when they aim to return. If they do not return within 4 weeks of the expected return date please follow attendance procedures.</p>	<p>If allocated and there is not an acceptance/agreed start date best practice is for school to make attempts to engage (telephone, text, e-mail, welcome letter, home visit (where appropriate)).</p> <p>If a child/young person has been allocated a place at your school/academy and they do not arrive you must inform the CMO within 10 days evidencing efforts to engage.</p> <p>If an application to transfer school during the year (outside of the normal intake process), the leaving school should keep them on roll until it has been confirmed by the new school that they have arrived and have been taken on roll.</p> <p>Places must be taken up by the start of the next half term after the place has been allocated. For places allocated in the summer term 2018, the place must be taken up before the end of the summer term. For children admitted through first admissions round please refer to your summer term guidance.</p> <p>A child should be placed on roll at the point of acceptance by parent or arriving on the first day.</p>
<p>Child and family meet the threshold for Early Help through the Family Service (level 3 Pathway to Provision). Make a referral to the Early Help Unit via an EHAF evidencing the actions you have taken.</p> <p>Absence meets the threshold for enforcement action as outlined in the Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct, make a referral to the Early Help Unit via an EHAF Child stays on roll.</p> <p>Referral is made to: Children Missing Officer (CMO) No later than day 10 when there is no explanation for absence and above checks have been completed.</p> <p>Details of how to refer are on page 2, please clearly state any safeguarding concerns you may have.</p> <p>DO NOT remove from your roll until CMO has completed initial checks and confirmed that they can be removed.</p>	<p>Parent/Carers indicate they wish to Home Educate (EHE)</p> <p>Request must be made in writing, following a conversation between school and parent/carers, with a copy of the letter placed in the pupil file and a copy of the letter forwarded securely to EHE.</p> <p>School/Academy to return the EHE 1A and 1B forms to the EHE Administrator.</p> <p>Remove the learner from your roll. DO NOT remove from your roll if stated without confirmation from the LA. School file to be sent to EHE at County Hall via secure mail.</p>	<p>Child permanently excluded</p> <p>LA to be notified on the day of exclusion via e-mail.</p> <p>The LA will respond and continue to work with you through the process.</p> <p>DO NOT remove from your roll until advised.</p> <p>Truancy – School/Academy to inform parent/carers that their child/young person is not in school. School/Academy risk assess before considering a Police response. (prior checks to be completed and evidenced upon calling the police, unless immediate risk evident). Please be mindful of missing and hidden missing where young people's whereabouts are not known to parent/carers. This can be discussed with the CMO.</p>	<p>If allocated children do not arrive PLEASE FOLLOW UP. DO NOT ASSUME they will have gone elsewhere or remained at their previous School/Academy!!</p> <p>Own admission authorities must inform the admissions team of any enquiry/application and outcome. This helps identify any vulnerable child requiring a place and avoids a child being out of education for an undue length of time. All academies must notify the local authority via admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register.</p> <p>Family indicate they are returning home for family, cultural or health reasons</p> <p>School/Academy need to consider the circumstances of the absence in deciding which code to use. Parents should provide school with a return date. If the family do not return on this date attendance procedures should be followed.</p>
<p>Child not in full receipt of education (25hrs)</p> <p>Information should be shared with the Fair Access Team. Levels of provision will be closely monitored and scrutinised.</p>	<p>SAFEGUARDING - Every child should be accounted for, their whereabouts should be known or a referral made to the appropriate service. Please be mindful that the MASH is for level 4 safeguarding concerns with children believed to be at risk of or actual harm. The Early Help Unit will support with early intervention/attendance. It is important that concerns are risk assessed by school. All referrals should indicate the level of concern and previous actions taken. A referral made to the correct service will help for support to be in place in a timely fashion. If unsure please seek guidance prior to referring.</p>	<p>Useful links: http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal/local-authority/attendance (Nottinghamshire Schools Portal) http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-childrens-trust/pathway-to-provision (P2P) http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/109754/factsheet-summer-term-final-2.pdf (Summer Term) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf (CME) http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-childrens-trust/pathway-to-provision/early-help-assessment-form (EHAF)</p>	<p>Health Related Education</p> <p>If a child has been out of school for 15 days or more due to illness please liaise with the School Nurse and then a referral can be made to: Health Related Education Team (please contact the Health Related Education Team to discuss a request for their involvement)</p>
<p>GUIDANCE FOR REMOVING A CHILD FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL</p> <p>PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE A CHILD FROM YOUR ROLL UNLESS YOU HAVE RECORDED AND SHARED THE FOLLOWING WITH THE LA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the full name of the pupil, the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, at least one telephone number of the parent, the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Annex A). This will need to be clearly recorded when updating your systems as you will need to inform the LA. <p>All other deletions breach statutory guidance</p>			